

§ 310.24 [Reserved]

§ 310.25 Contamination with micro-organisms; process control verification criteria and testing; pathogen reduction standards.

(a) Criteria for verifying process control; *E. coli* testing. (1) Each official establishment that slaughters livestock must test for *Escherichia coli* Biotype 1 (*E. coli*). Establishments that slaughter more than one type of livestock or both livestock and poultry, shall test the type of livestock or poultry slaughtered in the greatest number. The establishment shall:

(i) Collect samples in accordance with the sampling techniques, methodology, and frequency requirements in paragraph (a)(2) of this section;

(ii) Obtain analytic results in accordance with paragraph (a)(3) of this section; and

(iii) Maintain records of such analytic results in accordance with paragraph (a)(4) of this section.

(2) Sampling requirements.

(i) *Written procedures.* Each establishment shall prepare written specimen collection procedures which shall identify employees designated to collect samples, and shall address location(s) of sampling, how sampling randomness is achieved, and handling of the sample to ensure sample integrity. The written procedure shall be made available to FSIS upon request.

(ii) *Sample collection.* The establishment must collect samples from all chilled livestock carcasses, except those boned before chilling (hot-boned), which must be sampled after the final wash. Samples must be collected in the following manner;

(A) For cattle, establishments must sponge or excise tissue from the flank, brisket and rump, except for hide-on calves, in which case establishments must take samples by sponging from inside the flank, inside the brisket, and inside the rump.

(B) For sheep, goat, horse, mule, or other equine carcasses, establishments must sponge from the flank, brisket and rump, except for hide-on carcasses, in which case establishments must take samples by sponging from inside the flank, inside the brisket, and inside the rump.

(C) For swine carcasses, establishments must sponge or excise tissue from the ham, belly and jowl areas.

(iii) *Sampling frequency.* Slaughter establishments, except very low volume establishments as defined in paragraph (a)(2)(v) of this section, must take samples at a frequency proportional to the volume of production at the following rates:

(A) Cattle, sheep, goats, horses, mules, and other equines: 1 test per 300 carcasses, but, a minimum of one sample during each week of operation.

Swine: 1 test per 1,000 carcasses, but a minimum of one sample during each week of operation.

(iv) *Sampling frequency alternatives.* An establishment operating under a validated HACCP plan in accordance with § 417.2(b) of this chapter may substitute an alternative frequency for the frequency of sampling required under paragraph (a)(2)(iii) of this section if,

(A) The alternative is an integral part of the establishment's verification procedures for its HACCP plan and,

(B) FSIS does not determine, and notify the establishment in writing, that the alternative frequency is inadequate to verify the effectiveness of the establishment's processing controls.

(v) *Sampling in very low volume establishments.* (A) Very low volume establishments annually slaughter no more than 6,000 cattle, 6,000 sheep, 6,000 goats, 6,000 horses, mules or other equines, 20,000 swine, or a combination of livestock not exceeding 6,000 cattle and 20,000 total of all livestock. Very low volume establishments that collect samples by sponging shall collect at least one sample per week, starting the first full week of operation after June 1 of each year, and continue sampling at a minimum of once each week the establishment operates until June 1 of the following year or until 13 samples have been collected, whichever comes first. Very low volume establishments collecting samples by excising tissue from carcasses shall collect one sample per week, starting the first full week of operation after June 1 of each year, and continue sampling at a minimum of once each week the establishment operates until one series of 13 tests meets the criteria set forth in paragraph (a)(5)(i) of this section.